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ABSTRACT

The improvement of language skills and intercultural understanding among Australians for the purpose of increasing their country's ability to develop a strong export economy is explored. It is argued that a formidable language teaching system in education is vital to the strengthening of Australia's international reputation in world markets. Australians need to increase their skill levels in other languages and their understanding of other cultures and they must also use those skills to their best advantage. Fifteen vital issues related to the need for reform of the Australian language education system are enumerated and discussed. The paper concludes by calling for an increase in the number, diversity, and quality of second language teachers, and an educational policy that is less institutionally racist and more responsive to the country's economic and social needs. (TR)

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LANGUAGES AND THE EXPORT ECONOMY

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I PREAMBLE:

Both Australia's performance in international trade and the level of language learning in Australian schools and universities have declined disastrously over the last twenty-five years with only a slight adjustment occurring in the nature of language learning in response to Australia's changed ethnic structure and international situation. This paper argues that the two occurrences are probably related, the decline in language learning together with a failure to make use of the skills otherwise available having caused the nation to become less competitive internationally by making its products less compatible with its markets and its trade and diplomatic negotiations less insightful and convincing. It will be argued that, if Australia is to improve its international performance, to become more effective in international relations, and to rectify its gross balance of payments problems through increased exports, then it must urgently improve and extend its teaching and learning of languages. The grim reality seems to be that none of the mainly financial and industrial steps taken by successive Australian governments to devalue the currency, to provide export incentives, to impose or remove tariffs, to reduce wages and conditions, or to denigrate and weaken the unions are or ever will be effective in improving the trading position unless, most fundamentally, this nation understands the people it wants to sell to, unless it can match the products (whether goods or policies) to those people, and unless its promotional activities and negotiations are appropriate to those people and effective in selling the products advantageously.

Before this argument is pursued, however, it should be noted that, although this paper is focussing especially on the role of language teaching and learning in lubricating a nation's international trade and diplomatic relations, there are many other reasons for fostering a strong language teaching system in education, not the least being the vital role it plays in a multicultural society in strengthening identity, enriching cultural interaction, and fostering inter-community communication and understanding. In fact, since the early 1970's, there has been a major shift in focus in Australian language education to recognize, in policy if less so in practice, Australia's multiculturalism and, if anything, the role of language study in meeting the nation's international needs has been played down. This preoccupation with multiculturalism is well illustrated in the Commonwealth Department of Education's position paper preliminary to the work on a national language policy by the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts [see Commonwealth Department of Education 1982]. That ten-page document was almost entirely devoted to the role of languages within Australia in serving multiculturalism while the international role and implications, while not ignored, received relatively slight attention. Indeed, it was and remains highly desirable that Australian educational practice should recognize and respond to the multicultural-multilingual nature of the society and the present writer has written extensively on this subject and its pedagogical implications for language teaching [e.g., Ingram 1978: Chapters 5 and 6; 1979; 1979a; 1980; 1984]. However, these two roles, the intranational and the international, should not be seen as competing but as complementary and, in focussing on international issues and more especially on export issues, this paper is not implying that the other roles for language education and the other reasons for advocating a strong and universal language teaching-learning component in education are unimportant. In fact, with only a small proportion of Australian students doing any language

study, any disputation between advocates of a multicultural role for language teaching and advocates of an international role is quite ridiculous: as the report on the teaching of Asian languages and cultures stated more than 15 years ago,

> "In the Australian context, what is needed is much more teaching of languages and not merely a difference in kind."
> [Commonwealth Advisory Committee 1970: 70,99]

II THE EXPORT ECONOMY:

Australia's export performance has plummeted in the last twenty years and has, almost as dramatically, changed in direction. Every available indicator reflects Australia's failure to compete internationally: most recently, the dollar has devalued sharply causing imported goods to rise sharply in cost and Australia has dropped from third to tenth on the world's per capita incomes scale [EPAC 1986:1]. Over the twenty years to 1981, exports fell from 14% to 13% of gross national product (GNP) while, for the world as a whole, they rose from 9% to 16% [EPAC 1986:4]. In some countries (significantly, non-English-speaking countries in which language learning is valued and compulsory or strongly encouraged for all children), international competitiveness as reflected in the proportion of exports to GNP rose even more sharply from 8% to 14% for Japan, 14% to 45% for N.E. Asia, 10% to 37% for ASEAN, and 7% to 17% for the Middle East [EPAC 1986:4]. Of the 13 countries or regions listed in EPAC 1986, Australia is the only one whose proportion of exports to GNP actually declined during the period while, from 1973 to 1983, it slipped from twelfth to twenty-third in world trade rankings [EPAC 1986:4-6].

At the same time as Australia's proportion of exports was falling, the direction of trade was changing, most significantly away from predominantly English-speaking countries towards non-English-speaking. Whereas in 1951-5, 52% went to English-speaking countries and 48% to non-English-speaking, in 1984, the percentages respectively were 25% and 75% [EPAC 1986:9]. Other figures show that, whereas in 1951-5, 79% of our exports went to English-speaking countries and Europe with only 21% to non-English-speaking countries elsewhere (Asia 14%, others 7%), by 1978-82 only 37% went to English-speaking countries and Europe and 63% to non-English-speaking-non-European countries (Asia 46%, others 17%) [EPAC 1986: 9-10]. In other words, thirty years ago exports were promoted, negotiated and sold in countries that were culturally close and spoke the same language or spoke the languages (especially French and German) that predominated in the Australian education system and were learned by the majority of Australian students [see Section III]; since then, the direction of trade has changed especially towards Asia but, in the education system, French and German continue to predominate with numerically only small growth in other languages while the proportion of students learning any language other than English has plummeted (from, for example, more than half at matriculation to about one-ninth currently) [see Section III]. Such export figures do not mean, of course, that Australia has been dramatically more successful in selling to Asian and other non-English-speaking countries despite the lack of language skills and cultural understanding since, as already shown, Australia's export performance over that period has fallen disastrously.

A

During the same period, Australia's overall international orientation has changed similarly to the direction of trade. It has established bilateral and multilateral cultural, defence and other "mutual understanding and friendship" treaties with many other but predominantly non-English-speaking countries [cf. Yearbook Australia, 1985: Chapter 5], it has sought to present itself as a "middle power" giving leadership among smaller nations especially in the Asian-Pacific region rather than be seen as dependent on Britain and the United States, it provided aid in 1984-5 to some 80 largely non-English-speaking countries in the South Pacific, Asia, Africa and the Middle East [Yearbook Australia 1985: Chapter 5], its overseas visitor intake rose to almost one million annually with 36% from non-English-speaking countries, and it has established diplomatic and consular links with some 120 mainly non-English-speaking countries [Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts 1984: 126 ; see also Yearbook Australia 1985: Chapters 5, 6 and 26]. Overall, whereas at one time Australia's international involvement was predominantly with English-speaking countries (especially Britain, New Zealand and North America), the principal focus has now shifted to countries where English is not the first language [see also Commonwealth Advisory Committee 1970: 11-16; EPAC 1986: 1-2, 8-15]. Regrettably, the language education system has failed to match this change of direction or to meet the needs that the new orientation creates.

III AUSTRALIA'S LANGUAGE SITUATION (') :

Whereas in 1961, 43% of all children attending Secondary School were studying a language other than English with a slightly higher proportion at matriculation [Wykes and King 1968: 71,74], by 1983 only 34.1% took a language in Secondary School and only 11.9% in upper Secondary [Commonwealth Department of Education 1986: 16; cf also SSCEA 1984: 148-9]. One favourable if slight change was the expansion of languages in Primary Schools from virtually nil in 1961 [Wykes and King 1968: 31] to 6.6% of pupils in 1983 but 90% of Australian Primary Schools and 15% of Secondary Schools offered no languages at all [Commonwealth Department of Education 1986: 16,v]. Overall, this means that, in 1983, just 17.3% of all students in Primary and Secondary Schools in Australia were studying a language but only 11.9% had taken it for long enough (i.e. to the Upper Secondary School) to develop Survival Proficiency as measured on the ASLPR [Ingram and Wylie 1979; Ingram 1978: Chapter 3; Ingram 1985; Commonwealth Department of Education 1986: 16]. In other words, in 1983, at best 11.9% would have taken the language long enough to develop a minimal level of practical usefulness and, therefore, to a level where there was much likelihood of their maintaining some proficiency after leaving school. Enrolments in colleges and universities (at 1% and 7% respectively in 1981) are even lower [SSCEA 1984: 167-8]. In addition, despite a significant shift from 1961 to 1983 in the languages taught in Australia, the system remains not only numerically small but even more discordant with the pattern of Australia's international relations as outlined earlier. Thus, in 1961 when Australia's ties were with Europe, the 43% of Secondary students studying a language learned predominantly French with some Latin and German and with very small numbers learning Italian Hebrew, Greek, Russian, Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian [Wykes and King 1968: 75-76]. By 1983, some 30 languages were being taught in Primary and Secondary Schools but French, German and Italian (with the

small enrolments of 7.45%, 4.58% and 4.13% of all students) far exceeded the languages of the region and of our trading partners such as Japanese (0.61%), Chinese (0.13%), Arabic (0.11%) and Indonesian (0.88%) [Commonwealth Department of Education 1986: 16-18]. Universities are no more concordant with international needs since 59% of the small proportion of students taking one or more languages took French, German or Italian with fewer than a quarter taking Japanese, Indonesian, Chinese and Greek [SSCEA 1984: 167].

Clearly, therefore, the language education system is not only numerically small but has contracted sharply in the last twenty-five years during a time when Australia's needs for language skills and new cultural understanding have been changing in pattern and becoming more acute: the present system is both insufficient and inappropriate and is quite unable either to meet the needs that arise from Australia's international relations and trading patterns or to provide within Australia those pools of understanding of other nations that are vital if our policies, products and negotiations are to be relevant to the nations with whom we deal and to whom we must sell. Even worse and even more fundamentally, the language teaching system is too restricted and too inappropriate even to provide a pool of administrators, managers and bureaucrats sensitive to the vital importance of language skills and cross-cultural understanding and sufficient to leaven Australian diplomacy, bureaucracy and management. Bostock 1973 provides a well-argued case in support of this view, the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Asian languages and cultures in 1970 found Australian businessmen in general singularly unaware of the need to employ staff fluent in Asian languages and with an understanding of Asian cultures [Commonwealth Advisory Committee 1970: 17-21], and the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts in 1983 received submissions from various Federal Government Departments (including Foreign Affairs, Trade and Immigration) to the effect that they were unable to recruit sufficient Australians with language skills to meet their needs - the conservative figures they provided indicated a shortfall of 69.5% [2] [SSCEA 1984: 128].

However, the problem goes beyond a lack of language skills within the society. In fact, vast numbers of people proficient in other languages have been recruited as migrants but are in most cases prevented from using their other language or languages as a vocational skill. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has published figures that show that, in May 1983, 3.2 million (28%) of the 11.3 million Australians over 15 years of age claimed to have a language besides English, 16.8% had learned it as their first language, 16.3% had learned it as a second or foreign language, and quite high percentages (92.7% and 76.8% respectively) claimed they still used it socially or at home [Cameron 1983]. In other words, again, the problem is not solely a question of there being a lack of skills available but also a failure on the part of bureaucrats, managers and others in decision-making positions to perceive the needs, demand adequate and appropriate skills from the education system, and use those available. This is exemplified in the following facts, most of which were cited in the AFMLTA's submission on a national language policy [AFMLTA 1982: Section II.2]:

1. Often when Australians are assigned to overseas posts, no account is taken of their language skills. Thus, a Greek-speaking couple,

friends of the present writer, were assigned to an Embassy post in Greece but, before departure, were re-assigned to Paris though they had no French and had to take a short pre-departure course. Soon after, they were moved to Austria though they had no German and then to Poland though they had no Polish.

2. Reports have appeared in the press concerning the way in which reliance on local or other non-Australian translators in Australian Embassies has led to the Australian Embassy staff and, therefore, the Australian policy-makers being deceived. Bostock [1973] has shown how this practice had a profound impact on Australian foreign policy in the 1960's.

3. In 1982, the present writer was recruited as a member of a three-man aid project team to advise the Australian and Chinese governments on an English language teacher training project in Beijing, China. The team did not include any speaker of Chinese, was not provided with an interpreter, and had to rely on interpreters provided by the Chinese authorities. One of these interpreters, when eventually challenged, admitted that he translated only so much of the Australian questions as he thought appropriate and only so much of the Chinese replies as he thought would convince the Australian team that the project should proceed. Probably most Australian aid and trade delegations are similarly ill-equipped linguistically and can be no more confident of the information given and received through interpreters whose first loyalty lies other than with Australia.

4. The AFMLTA's submission referred to information given the Federation by senior officials in Federal departments concerning occasions when, in tripartite negotiations, the Australian party had lost major trade contracts because the other vendor was able to speak the purchaser's language and influence the purchaser's negotiators during the informal, social activities.

5. The Australian newspaper on 24 April, 1986, carried reports of how Australian participation in an important world wool conference in Madrid was significantly impeded because no Australian interpreter or translator was available either to the delegation or from the Australian Embassy, documents could not be translated into Spanish, and the only interpreter facilities the delegation could obtain were from young tour guides with little English and no technical knowledge. One of the Australian delegates referred to similar problems at an earlier conference in Japan and it seems highly probable that the same situation arises during most conferences and missions in which Australians are involved. Significantly, the newspaper report indicated that the South African delegation at the Madrid conference was accompanied by a technical aide fluent in English, Spanish, Italian, German and French.

6. In 1981, the Modern Language Teachers Association of Queensland wrote to all trade-related Federal and Queensland Government Departments to elicit their attitudes and practices in the language area. Those of Queensland were exemplified in the following excerpts from the then Minister for Primary Industries:

"1. My Department has not conducted any surveys in connection with the language needs of officers working overseas...

2. Competency in languages other than English is not taken into consideration when recruiting staff.

3. To date we have not found it necessary to make use of the services of an interpreter or arrange translation of documents when receiving overseas delegations here in Queensland.

4. If the services of an interpreter are required when officers are overseas...they are normally arranged by the host country or organisation.

5. No preference is given in our staff recruitment policy to persons with skills in languages other than English." [see MLTAQ Newsletter, No. 47, August 1981: 5-11].

With such attitudes rampant in business, industry and the bureaucracy, it is not surprising that Australia's international effectiveness and, in particular, its export economy should seem to be in desperate straits. Indeed, recently [see Kelly 1986:15], in deploring the complacency rampant in Australian economic life, the Federal Minister for Industry, Technology and Science, Senator Button, called for basic reforms in the Australian education system and "a far greater effort to understand the region at the language and cultural level"; the Minister for Science, Mr. Jones, laid the blame for Australian manufacturers' failing to capitalize on developments in South East Asia on their failure to read and be aware of new technology and on Australians' increasing failure to speak the language of its major trading partners [see The Advertiser, 19 June, 1986 and Français je t'aime, No.3, June 1986, p.31]; while the Minister for Trade, Mr. Dawkins, deplored the reluctance of Australian business "to accept that the focus of economic dynamism was shifting to Asia" and went on:

"Once again, as a nation, we are in danger of being an also-ran. Among the last to relinquish the past and embrace the future. Our own conservatism, our anglophilia, our cultural myopia, indeed our racism, could again be our undoing." [Cited in Kelly 1986].

IV LANGUAGES CONTRIBUTING TO EXPORTS:

IV.1 The Aim:

If Australia aspires to improve its export economy, the most fundamental issue is whether people in other countries want our products and whether we can persuade them to buy. It would, in fact, seem axiomatic that, if a nation wishes to influence other people, to convince them to adopt certain policies, or to persuade them to buy certain goods, then the essential starting-point is to accommodate to them, to speak their language, to understand their views, to match our

product (whether ideas or goods) to their needs, to establish close personal relationships with their negotiators, and to promote our product in the commercially most effective language, the one they speak. These things are possible only if the Australian Departments, agencies or companies contain people at all stages from design to production to promotion to negotiation who speak the languages of the clients and thoroughly understand their cultures. In fact, representatives of the Confederation of Australian Industry and of the Department of Trade conceded in evidence to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts that, "if Australian businessmen and trade commissioners were fluent in other languages", Australian trade would benefit [see SSCEA 1984:127].

IV.2 Competitors' Policies:

Australia's main competitors and clients are unambiguous in their views. In Britain, the Federation of British Industry has stated bluntly:

> "...an increase in exports depends very much upon the ability to meet the potential customer on his own ground and to speak his language..." [Federation of British Industry 1964: 4]
>
> 'British firms should be aware of the fact that a knowledge of foreign languages forms an important and effective weapon in the armoury of our overseas competitors and that industry and commerce will need in future many more people, at all levels, who are conversant with foreign languages with a reasonable degree of fluency." [Federation of British Industry 1962: 1]
>
> "...If negotiations are not to be entirely in the agents' hands, and the company's staffs are to meet their customers on their own ground and get on good terms with them, they must have an adequate command of their language." [Federation of British Industry 1964: 9]

The United States' record in language learning has not, in the past, been much better than Australia's. However, in recent years, that country seems to have become very aware of the problem and the absolute necessity of rectifying it. In 1978, the President set up a Commission into foreign language and international studies whose report strongly emphasized the absolute and fundamental importance of language learning and has led to a proliferation of bills to Congress, the re-allocation of Federal and State funds, the establishment of new programmes, and the re-introduction of foreign language requirements at all levels but especially for university entry or graduation. Amongst other things in a long and strong report, the Commission stated in 1979:

> "Nothing less is at issue than the nation's security...
>
> "...A nation's welfare depends in large measure on the intellectual and psychological strengths that are derived from

perceptive visions of the world beyond its own boundaries...an international perspective is indispensable...

"The future will belong to nations that are wise as well as strong. This consideration underlines the absolute necessity to develop and maintain a first-class apparatus to enable Americans to cope with the changing world...

"...we wish to record our deep concern over the complacent and defeatist attitude with which all too many public officials and professionals view the deficiencies that our study so amply confirms...The damage to America's competitive edge in international commerce and our repeated unpreparedness for events overseas...illustrate the risks inherent in such penny-wise and pound-foolish attitudes.

"...our lack of foreign language competence diminishes our capabilities in diplomacy, in foreign trade, and in citizen comprehension of the world in which we live and compete..." [Perkins 1979: 457-8]

The report went on to demand a dramatic increase in the numbers learning foreign languages, the reinstitution of foreign language requirements at all levels, the allocation of new and increased resources, employment incentives, much improved teacher education (including the funding of special regional centres to "investigate and upgrade the foreign language and teaching competencies of foreign language teachers at all levels" [p. 459]), utilisation of the language resources of the 'ethnic minorities', the formation of Advisory Councils on Foreign Language and International Studies, strengthening relevant professional associations, increased research activities, fostering international exchanges, use of the media to improve public awareness, and the inclusion of foreign language study in all business degrees. [See Perkins 1979 for the introduction to the Commission's report Strength through Wisdom.]

Many of the initiatives that have followed the recommendations of the President's Commission are reported in the bimonthly ACTFL Newsletter which thus reflects the rapidly developing American attitudes, policies and practices. Typical of the many decisions to mandate foreign language requirements at various levels of the education system was the recent action of the Board of Regents of South Dakota's universities whose President commented:

"There is no way we are going to continue to operate in a monolingual world. An international businessman who can't speak a foreign language faces serious disadvantages." [Reported in ACTFL Newsletter, March 1986]

Typical of teacher education and research initiatives is the United States Senate's approval on 3 June, 1986 of the "Higher Education Act"

which, inter alia, "provides funds for summer institutes for training foreign language teachers, graduate students, and pre- and in-service teachers, regional language centres, and further research on language proficiency" [ACTFL Newsletter, July 1986, p.1]. The "Trade and International Economic Policy Reform Act" passed by the House of Representatives in 1986 allocated $500 million to improve foreign language and other trade-related education while the "Competitive American Trade Reform Act" contains provisions recognizing the importance of foreign languages to trade [ACTFL Newsletters, March and July, 1986]. The Joint National Committee for Languages has started publishing a regular survey of State initiatives in foreign language and international education listing new school and degree requirements, teacher-proficiency standards, consultants appointed, and other new programmes and reforms. Various national bodies (e.g., the National Endowment for Humanities) are sponsoring State and national conferences and other activities focussing on foreign languages including the use of satellite technology to improve foreign language instruction through exchanges between American and foreign colleges [ACTFL Newsletter, July 1986]. Of particular significance is the position paper and recommendations for action of the Council of Chief State School Officers [1986] released in November 1985 which emphasizes the need for students to be educated for life in the "global community", the vital importance for all students of learning a language other than English to "an acceptable level of proficiency" both to provide "the ability to communicate effectively across nations and cultures" and "to understand other cultures". The report recommends on language requirements, teacher education (including requirements for experience in the country of origin of the language), student exchanges and study abroad, improved methods, expanded research and data collection, accountability, new programmes, and policy review at all levels. In brief, the United States' language education system had declined but, in direct response to considerations of international relations and, not least, international trade, wide-ranging attempts are now being made to greatly expand the level and quality of the learning of foreign languages by Americans. This is seen as an absolute necessity if the United States is to remain competitive in world trade.

Elsewhere, restitution of language education has not been so necessary since its vital role has always been recognized and a strong language education system has long existed. Throughout the ASEAN countries, Japan, and Korea, the learning of foreign languages is universal in schools and the almost frantic desire of such people as the Japanese to improve their skills is apocryphal. In contrast to the attitudes of Australian business and officialdom outlined earlier, Simon pointed out that there were more than ten thousand Japanese salesmen in New York City alone all of whom spoke English [Simon 1980 : 3]. He quotes another Japanese businessman who, when asked which is the most important language in the field of trade, responded "Your client's". It is significant that, in these countries where virtually all students learn at least one foreign language, the proportion of exports to GNP rose dramatically from 1961 to 1981: in Japan from 8% to 14%, N.E. Asia 14% to 45%, and ASEAN from 10% to 37% [EPAC 1986 : 4].

In Europe also, it is expected that all students will learn at least one foreign language. Several resolutions of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe dating back to 1954 have urged that in all schools at least one language should be taught to all children, from, at the latest, the age of 10. Similarly, the Council of the

European Economic Community has required that all students learn at least one other language of the EEC [cf. Hawkins 1981 : 181-59]. Recommendation No. R (82)18 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted on 24 September, 1982 reinforced existing policies and, having recalled the earlier resolutions dating back to 1954, and,

> "...Considering that it is only through a better knowledge of European modern languages that it will be possible to facilitate communication and interaction... to promote... mutual understanding and cooperation...",

it went on to make some 18 recommendations designed to widen and improve the teaching of modern languages at all ages and educational levels including:

> "1. To ensure, as far as possible, that all sections of their populations have access to effective means of acquiring a knowledge of the languages of other member states... to deal with the business of everyday life... to exchange information and ideas... to achieve wider and deeper understanding of the way of life and forms of thought of other peoples and of their cultural heritage...
>
> "4. To encourage the teaching of at least one (other) European language... to pupils from the age of ten... or earlier.... in such a way as to enable them by the end of the period of compulsory schooling... to use the language effectively for communication with other speakers of that language, both in transacting the business of everyday life and in building social and personal relations..." [Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers 1982 : 1-2].

The purpose of this policy has been to improve communication and cooperation among Europeans [cf. Council for Cultural Cooperation of the Council of Europe CDCC Project Group 4 1981 : 3] and has been realized not only in widespread (in most countries, universal) language learning in schools but also in research and syllabus design innovations (such as the threshold level and related issues and major innovations in functional-notional approaches) that have had major impact on applied linguistics worldwide. The economic impact of this growing cooperation between European countries is well-known, has been a major contributor to the economic difficulties of Australia, New Zealand and the United States (which, we have seen, had sought on, in Australia's case at least, are seeking to stand off in ethnocentric and linguistic isolation in world trade), and is reflected in a growth in exports to GNP from 14% to 24% from 1962 to 1981 [EPAC 1986 : 4].

IV.3 The Reasons:

The reasons for such policies as we have just observed and the impact of them on a country's performance in international trade is both direct (in improving the product, enhancing promotion, and facilitating effective negotiation) and indirect (in improving the quality of the intellectual processes that underlie all human activity from policy-making to research and development to marketing).

IV. 3.1 The Direct Reasons:

Basically the need is to ensure that the products we sell are those that meet our clients' needs or that they can be persuaded to buy. In other words, the need is for Australian companies and negotiators to understand their potential clients in order to ensure the product is suitable, that the promotion is as effective as possible, and that, in negotiation, Australian negotiators start equal with their counterparts. For all these purposes, it is vital that the clients' language be spoken and their culture understood. Inman [1986] in her surveys of languages in American companies marketing overseas noted that many felt that "linguistic incompatibility" hindered them in building relationships, limited their marketing capabilities, and led to erroneous decisions. She cites other surveys where it was reported that sales and profits rose when attention was paid to language and cultural training. She concludes at one point:

> "...the language of international trade must not necessarily be English or any other, but rather the language of one's customer. Successful exporting countries among which Japan and West Germany figure prominently have readily penetrated international markets largely because of their efforts to understand the linguistic and cultural characteristics of their customers." [Inman 1986 : 5]

It is through learning the language that one most effectively and insightfully comes to understand another culture. The theoretical and empirical evidence in support of this view has been presented elsewhere [e.g., Ingram 1978 : Chapter 5; Ingram 1979]. Experientially, Hawkins quotes various ambassadors and business people who are adamant that the path to understanding is through the language and, without the language,

> "... you will never have the complete feel of the country".
>
> "If you are dependent on other people...[as] trading partners to export to or buy from, it is just as well to understand those you depend on. And there is no single better method of insight into people's ways of thought and feeling than their language, and how they use it." [Quoted in Hawkins 1981 : 35-36]

Without an understanding of their clients, neither individual companies

nor the nation as a whole can match their product to their market; where this match fails to occur, the clients will turn elsewhere and, as the international competition becomes greater, so they will become more discriminating. This basic mismatch is one reason given by the Economic Planning Advisory Council for Australia's declining trading position; it observed that Australia's exports are largely in areas where total world import demand has grown only slowly while the most successful trading countries have emphasized the necessity of linking their production to world markets [EPAC 1986:1 and 6]. It also observed:

> "It is important to recognize that direct financial export incentives will have only marginal effect compared to efforts to improve access to markets and the underlying competitiveness of Australia's productive sectors." [EPAC 1986:3]

Thus, understanding the nature of the market and fitting the products to it are vital if the export economy is to be strong. Approaches to improving exports such as those which have dominated Australian enterprise and have been based largely on efforts to reduce government spending and cut wages and conditions will, alone, be futile. They will be futile, first, because they are attacking only peripheral problems and leave the central question of the suitability of the product to the market's real or creatable need untouched and, second, because they both directly (through reduced government spending on education) and indirectly (especially through lower training incentives) hinder the development of the linguistic and other skills that are indisputable necessities if the quality, suitability and cost-effectiveness of Australian products are to be increased. Most importantly, the product must fit the need since there is no doubt that people will buy an article or a service that closely meets their needs even if it costs more than one that does not or does so less adequately. It is no coincidence that, at this time of export crisis, press reports from certain ASEAN countries have complained that Australian products fail to discriminate between the different countries in the region. It is as though, in their ethnocentric complacency, Australian companies are saying, "This is our product - take it or leave it!" and, when there are other products more culturally suitable (i.e., more suited to its needs), the market leaves it. It is also futile for a company to say, "Tell us how to modify what we offer and we will change it." That is the very point: the international market has no obligation to buy but someone who wants to sell must offer something people want or they will turn elsewhere; the company must itself understand what will match the market needs and it can only do that if it employs people who speak the language, understand the culture, can do market research, and can provide advice at all stages from design to marketing.

In addition, even if the products from Australia and elsewhere are equal in quality, price and appropriateness, if they are promoted, sold and serviced through English while the competition is in the local language, then the competing products will be bought. Finlay states:

> "[Products] now have to be described, sold and serviced through the languages of the countries in question and in

strong competition with similar goods from a number of other countries, as a visit to most countries in the world will more than amply confirm." [Finlay 1973:x]

Thus, despite the fact that English has become the major international language, it is arrogant and commercially self-defeating to rely on English [cf. Finlay 1973:v,vi: Hawkins 1981:38-39]. First, to sell their products significantly, exporters must penetrate the growing consumer societies where English will be much less spoken than among the educated élite. Second, the courtesy of speaking the trading partner's own language itself is convincing. Simon explains from his own experience:

"You sell when you communicate. I used to be in the newspaper and printing business. I bought in some cases because of price, in some cases because of the quality of the product, but generally I bought on the basis of the sales person, because that person communicated to me effectively...

"...You can buy in any language : you can't sell in any language..." [Simon 1980:2-3]

A leading British trade promoter stated:

"Language is the most important aspect of presentation, and knowledge and use of the client's or purchaser's language could be decisive." [Finlay 1973:vi]

The U.S. President's Commission put it thus:

"While the use of English as a major international language of business, diplomacy and science should be welcomed as a tool for understanding across national boundaries, this cannot be safely considered a substitute for direct communications in the many areas and on innumerable occasions when knowledge of English cannot be expected. The fact remains that the overwhelming majority of the world's population neither understands nor speaks English... Our vital interests are impaired by the fatuous notion that our competence in other languages is irrelevant..." [Perkins 1979:458]

Third, understanding of another people and culture can be attained only at the most superficial level without the language which the people speak and which carries and reflects the structure of their culture [see Ingram 1978: Chapter 5; 1979]. As Bostock, a political scientist, states:

"Language and culture cannot be detached regardless of the area of activity under study, be it politics, history or

> family life... the idea that one can study a 'culture'...without learning the language in which that culture is expressed is incorrect and can lead to dangerous oversimplifications of complex situations through its necessary dependence on secondary, i.e. interpreted, sources." [Bostock 1973:50]

One might also assert that the need for foreign language skills can be met by employing foreign nationals as agents or interpreters while the company still operates entirely in English. We have already seen [Section III] that this offers no solution since, first, the foreign nationals' loyalty is to their own country, neither a nation nor a company can be certain that the advice given is in its best interests or has not been distorted or falsified out of patriotic loyalty or malice (see examples given in Section III), and, in any case, the fees of such agents are often such as to adversely and unnecessarily affect profit margins [3] [cf. Hawkins 1981:39]. In addition, one of the reasons for exporters to employ people with skills in other languages is in order to keep up with research and development innovations, to know what competing developments are taking place, and hence to know what their market competitors are doing. This entails not only watching the market (once the new products are on the market the competition has been lost) but especially keeping up to date in the research literature whatever the language in which it is published or discussed. The Federation of British Industry says:

> "No company can afford to be unaware of the developments in other countries, and the vast amount of scientific and technical literature in languages other than English must be sifted, abstracted and absorbed." [Federation of British Industry 1964:9; cf.1963:13]

To some extent the necessity for this sort of knowledge is reflected in the growth of industrial espionage, yet Australian companies who fail to employ market analysts, researchers or other staff with skills in other languages are neglecting the most readily and publicly available information, viz. the world's journals and conferences. Finlay states from a context in British industry which starkly contrasts with its Australian counterpart (as Section III has shown):

> "A general phenomenon in British industry during the post-war period has been the increased demand for language services of one type or another....probably the most important...[reason] has been the literature explosion in almost every field...
>
> "This literature explosion has been at two levels. Firstly, there has been a vast growth in new technologies and techniques... Secondly, there has been a great increase in the number of languages which have become important as vehicles for imparting information..." [Finlay 1973:ix]

Finlay goes on to refer to the importance in particular of Russian and Japanese, significantly two languages which are under-represented in

the Australian language education system with only .61% of students learning Japanese and with Russian numerically so small that it fails to appear in any of the tables in the 1983 survey (except, again significantly, that showing teachers available) [Commonwealth Department of Education 1986: Chapter 3].

One means by which companies and government departments can obtain the language skills needed is undoubtedly by training their employees in the needed languages. Equally they could do so in Mathematics, Physics, Geography, Marketing, Management and Administration, or whatever else is required. However, the education system is set up to do just that and, if employees with language skills are to be available, then it is essential that the education system produce far more people proficient in other languages, that means be found to make use of (hence give other training to) migrants proficient in other languages, and that additional back-up facilities be available to train people in other languages when suitable staff already proficient cannot be found. Overall, the need in languages, as it is in other skills, is for the education system to provide pools of people proficient in other languages (or at least with basic skills that can be rapidly expanded) and with understanding of Australia's actual and potential trading partners. From these pools, the employees and some "experts" can then be drawn. Thus, to take three examples from among many, if Australia is serious about dragging itself out of its present trading mire, the education system should be producing many more people proficient in Japanese but also in Chinese and Malay-Indonesian since Japan, China, Malaysia and Indonesia provide massive potential markets which, if Australia understands their needs, it will be able to exploit to its commercial advantage.

The need for these "pools" of language skills and understanding, however, goes beyond meeting the immediate staffing needs of exporting companies however important that might be since general, informed policy-making (especially in a democratic system, whether of government or business management) occurs only if the rank-and-file are informed. As Simon has complained of the United States:

> "We fail to enrich ourselves as we should...A narrow, provincial, short-sighted people inevitably will produce narrow, provincial, short-sighted leaders." [Simon 1980:2]

He goes on [1980:4-5] to state that we cannot predict where the future critical areas for international activity (whether security, diplomacy or trade) might be and so not only should the education system be seeking to meet immediate or immediately predictable needs for language skills and understanding but

> "We ought to be preparing people..in...all the other languages...so that we understand people, we can communicate, we can understand other cultures." [Simon 1980:5]

The President of the United States National Council on Foreign Language and International Studies, Rose L. Hayden, has stated in a study of U.S. Federal support for international education:

> "On the face of it, there would seem to be little argument that the United States should have an educational system that produces at least a minimal cadre of experts about other peoples and cultures, as well as professionals in business and government who can transact negotiations across national borders... And, finally, we should have citizens knowledgeable enough to support tough leadership decisions and policies in a complicated and dangerous world." [Report in ACTFL Newsletter, Vol.V, No.3, May 1986:3]

Such a need is no less acute in Australia which has a similar demographic structure and is at least as dependent economically on the rest of the world.

IV. 3.11 The Indirect Reasons: Though the previous discussion provides quite basic and direct reasons for attention to be given to improving the level and use of language skills in Australia if we are to compete internationally and improve our export situation, even more fundamental is the contribution of language study to the enhancement of the intellectual processes, cognitive flexibility and creativity that underlie all human activity, not least commercial and industrial policy-making, development and marketing. In fact, Australia compares most unfavourably with other developed nations in trade in what the Economic Planning Advisory Council [1986:15] terms "elaborately transformed manufactures" (ETM's), i.e., products which require innovation, skill, and technological strength and which reflect, at the people's level, intellect, cognitive flexibility and creativity. Whereas more than half the world's trade is in manufactured goods, only 20% of Australia's exports are in manufactures while, of these, only 55% are ETM's compared with 80% of world trade. In fact, it seems that Australia is only 21st out of 23 OECD countries in what Ellyard terms our "brain-based" products [Ellyard 1985]. If Australia is to be competitive, it must be innovative, it must produce products that are not only needed by the rest of the world but are different from those available elsewhere and superior to them in every aspect from efficiency of production, to effectiveness of marketing, to the quality and suitability of the product itself. If Australia's performance is to be improved in this way, then it must be realized, as the U.S. President's Commission realized, that it is the nation's "intellectual and psychological strengths" that are critical [see Perkins 1979:457] and the nation must become marked out for its inventiveness, its creativity, and the quality of its thought in policy-making, scientific, industrial, and commercial research, and management. For this to occur, the education system must be designed not only to maximize academic attainment and to provide a secure foundation in those basic skills and in the range of knowledge needed to survive in this society and in the world but it must also maximize such features as creativity and cognitive flexibility. Ellyard has stated:

> "...the key words which will determine our economic future are our creativity, our inventiveness, our innovativeness, our entrepreneurship, and our management and organizational capacities...It is the education system...which will need to

be a most critical component of our future economic and social development." [Ellyard 1985:1]

There has been, over the last decade, a rapidly multiplying mass of empirical as well as theoretical evidence that bilingualism and the experience of learning another language have highly beneficial effects on general cognitive development, creativity, cognitive flexibility, first language development, general educational attainment, and cross-cultural understanding and attitudes; the weight of evidence is now beyond dispute that those children who learn another language score more favourably in all these areas than their monolingual peers and that benefit is in accord with the quality and amount of exposure to second language learning they have [see, for example, Swain and Cummins 1979, D'Anglejan and Tucker 1971, Ure 1980, Hancock 1977, Landry 1973 and 1974, Di Pietro 1980, Samuels and Griffore 1979, Titone 1978].

Possibly the largest body of evidence in favour of this view has been accumulated in long-term studies of the many French immersion programmes in Canada. This and other evidence is well reviewed in Swain and Cummins 1979 and is summarized in Ingram 1980 (pp.12-14). More recently, other longitudinal studies have been conducted with equally significant results. To take just two such studies, the Louisiana Department of Education compared matched groups of elementary school students and found that those who took a second language scored significantly higher on the 1985 Basic Skills Language Arts Test in Mathematics [see ACTFL Newsletter, Vol.V,No.4, July, 1986] while Fradd [1982], like Landry in his earlier studies [1973,1974], found that learning another language had a decisive and favourable impact on cognitive development including divergent thinking, cognitive flexibility and creativity [see also de Avila et al 1981]. In other words, if Australia is to improve its international competitiveness, it must ensure that its education system maximizes the educational and intellectual development, creativity, and cognitive flexibility of its children; to do so, it is vital that all children experience the benefits of learning at least one other language. More bluntly, unless Australia takes steps to upgrade its education system, its level of technological development and, most importantly, the quality and extent of its language teaching-learning system, it will condemn successive generations to progressive economic impoverishment and to its primary cause, progressive intellectual under-achievement. At a time when all its competitors are upgrading their general education and their language education in particular, dramatically improving the quality of their commercial and industrial activity, and maximizing their international competitiveness, it behoves Australia to reverse its downward spiral and take the hard, fundamental but vital decisions to drastically upgrade the quality of education and, not least, to ensure that all children benefit from the learning of another language both to provide the nation with the language skills and international-intercultural understanding it desperately needs and to ensure that all children develop to their full potential their general education, their intellect, their creativity and their understanding of other cultures. This answer to Australia's economic crisis is far more difficult to implement than the peripheral cutting of salaries and conditions but, without it, no other action, no matter how severe, will resolve the export problems.

V IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING:

Basically, the need is to ensure that the language teaching-learning system is renewed, upgraded and extended to meet both Australia's internal and international needs. The system has been allowed to run down, there are entrenched in education administration, business, and industry attitudes that make one less than optimistic that decisive wide-ranging action can or will be taken; yet this paper has argued that, whatever the effort and whatever the cost, that action must be taken if Australia is to regain its international competitiveness and economic strength; in addition, other papers (including many by the present writer) have, over the last 15 years, argued the absolute centrality of an effective and universal language teaching system for the internal health of Australia's multicultural society. The Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts suffered no illusions and, after considering the evidence, concluded in its report on a national language policy:

> "Although language training is costly,...[in] the Committee's view, the upgrading of Australia's language capabilities to fulfil its international obligations is an urgent matter and must be given a high priority for the allocation of resources." [SSCEA 1984:131]

Since it is not possible here to discuss in full the changes needed to the Australian language education system to enable it to meet the needs outlined in this paper, this section will simply enumerate (largely without argument) some of the more vital issues. A fuller discussion is available in other papers [e.g., Ingram 1978, 1979, 1980, 1984 and, especially, AFMLTA 1982].

1. The fundamental importance of language learning to Australia, to its economic, international and internal security, must be recognized and realized in the education system in curriculum policies, programmes, support services, and formal requirements that ensure that all children develop a practical level of proficiency in at least two languages (i.e., English and at least one other), that they develop a thorough understanding of at least one other culture, and that they develop those favourable cross-cultural attitudes and understandings essential to a harmonious, successful and rewarding life in a multicultural society and world. Sixteen years on, we can continue to ignore the call of the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Asian Languages and Cultures for "much more teaching of languages" in Australia only at the nation's very real peril [Commonwealth Advisory Committee 1970: 70, 99, quoted in Section I above].

2. Learning a second language to a practical level of proficiency and maintaining it must be made compulsory, i.e., it must be regarded as a core component of the curriculum [see Ingram 1980 for further arguments on the place of languages in the core curriculum]. The pseudo-democratic stance which allowed the mastery of another language to be optional while other subjects (English, Mathematics, Science and Social Sciences) remained obligatory either throughout or at some stage of schooling has manifestly failed to the point where the very security of the nation is at risk [cf. Perkins 1979:457-458] and where, at the individual level, the intellectual potential of young Australians has been eroded. Not least, in order to meet the pressing employment needs for language skills and the understanding of other cultures, it is essential, in languages as much as in any other educational area, to create pools of expertise from which the employment needs can be filled. The Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts has recognized this necessity, as have the Education Departments in some Australian States (e.g., South Australia, Victoria, and, it is expected, West Australia):

> "The Committee..recommends that all secondary students should experience language learning for a minimum period of one year, at levels suitable to their abilities." [SSCEA 1984:153-154]

This is a step forward but it is unfortunate that, as yet, no official policy decision anywhere in Australia has recognized that one year in an unintensive Secondary School programme is too short to develop a practical level of proficiency or significant cultural understanding. Some United States education systems are, as we noted earlier, recognizing this necessity and, in fact, the U.S. Congress has passed a resolution calling for foreign language requirements to be re-instated in the entrance requirements of post-secondary institutions and for proficiency in a foreign language to be a prerequisite for College graduation [House of Congress Resolution 301. Re: Foreign Language Studies and International Studies, which passed the U.S. Senate on 12 August, 1980].

3. The first priorities of all language courses must be to develop practical proficiency and cross-cultural understanding: they are the skills of which the society has desperate need and, in any case, proficiency is prerequisite to most of the other aims that language teaching has at some time espoused (e.g., literary appreciation, aesthetic development, and translation skills). Indeed, numerous studies have shown that the greatest cause of learner dissatisfaction with language study has been the failure of programmes to develop or, often, to seek a practical level of proficiency [see

Ingram 1980a; Fairbairn and Pegolo 1983a: 24,33; Holt 1971]. The national language policy report is quite unambiguous on this point, describes "the acquisition of practical communication skills" as "of paramount importance", and goes on to demand that tertiary institutions provide courses that are "appropriate to the needs of government and business" [SSCEA 1984:171-172]. It is particularly important that proficiency be developed in speaking and listening since these are especially in demand in international business, industry, and diplomacy [cf. Federation of British Industries 1962:2,10; Emmans et al 1974] and the studies of student attitudes cited earlier show that these are the skills students most demand and feel they least develop. However, as the preceding discussion has shown, there is also need for reading (e.g., to keep abreast of developments both in the relevant academic, research, or marketing field and socially in the target countries) and for writing (e.g., to engage in correspondence and to prepare promotional or service literature).

4. Such issues as discussed here have important implications for methodology, course types, course design, and time allocations, all of which must be such that they permit the attainment of useful levels of practical proficiency. What those levels will be will differ according to the educational level and the purpose of the course but it is reasonable to state that ASLPR 1+ or, preferably, 2 (Survival Proficiency or Minimum Social Proficiency) should be the minimum level sought in school programmes since otherwise the learners will have too little language to interact freely with native speakers, they are unlikely to seek encounters that involve using the language, and, consequently, their language will rapidly decline. Innovation is needed in methods and course design. Even though, in recent years, most States and Territories have moved towards some form of communicative or proficiency-based syllabuses and methods in Secondary Schools, their actual use is far from universal and there are other desirable approaches which, if not to be advocated for universal adoption, nevertheless have important parts to play within the total system. Such approaches include "sections bilingues" (in which the language being learned is used to teach some other subject) and "immersion programmes" (in which the target language is used to teach all or most of the school curriculum). Most importantly, the language teaching system must draw on the developments in proficiency rating and syllabus design that have occurred in the last decade and learn to be as precise and explicit in identifying and responding to needs and setting goals and objectives as industry, commerce and government are expected to be. The days are long past when language programmes could be vague in their intention with the focus falling on the process of language learning and teaching rather than on proficiency goals and their attainment with the tacit implication that the society should accept on trust (or, more frequently, reject) what language programmes offer.

If we buy a car, we expect to know what it can do before buying; if a factory buys a machine, the manager expects to know what it can do before parting with his money: it is no less important that the language teaching system be rigorous in setting and attaining proficiency goals relevant to the needs of the society. One aspect of being specific and rigorous in this way demands that the language teaching system (both policy-makers and curriculum or syllabus designers) use the needs-analysis skills now available in applied linguistics and be much more responsive to the real needs of society. One corollary of this and a further example of the intellectual rigour that must characterize language teaching as it responds to society's needs entails more "specific purpose" courses so that learners can develop skills directly relevant to their vocational or academic area [cf. SSCEA 1984:173].

5. Better understanding is required by both language students and language teachers of the nature of language skills and their role in industry and commerce. Languages are tools by which to get things done; they are not ends in themselves except for linguists. It is unlikely, in any society, that many people will be employed solely for their language skills except for the relatively few people who gain employment as translators and interpreters. Rather, as the nature of the earlier discussion makes clear, language skills and cultural understanding are required as supplementary skills by a large number of staff in export industries [cf. Inman 1986:5]. In addition to a change of perspective amongst language learners and teachers, this demands a change in the structure especially of tertiary and vocational courses in Australia to allow more opportunity for language study to be combined with other fields (e.g., French and horticulture; Japanese and electronics) and, as well as general proficiency, to develop proficiency in vocationally relevant special registers. Such programmes produce people who combine traditional vocational skills with the language and cultural knowledge and skills that enable them to contribute in the ways already discussed to international commerce and diplomacy (as well as to work more effectively in Australia's own multicultural-multilingual society). Such degrees have long been established overseas [e.g., for Britain, see James and Rouve 1973], and were recommended in the national language policy report by the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts [SSCEA 1984:231, Recommendation 91; see also Perkins 1979:460, 462-3, Recommendation VI].

6. Employment conditions, industrial awards, and vocational registration requirements should recognize the vital importance of language and cultural skills through recruitment preference, financial and other career incentives, registration regulations, and the opportunity in in-service education or re-training programmes to develop and maintain them. The Senate Standing Committee

on Education and the Arts recommended that the Federal Public Service give recruitment "preference for overseas postings" to people proficient "in a relevant foreign language", that training and re-training opportunities be extended, and that the "Language Proficiency Allowance" be maintained at a genuine incentive level [SSCEA 1984:129-132]; such recommendations need to become conditions throughout Federal and State Departments, business and industry which have actual or potential overseas involvement (in fact, granted Australia's multicultural society, throughout all Australian public service, business and industry)[see also Perkins 1979:460, 462-3; Hawkins 1981:36, 41; Federation of British Industries 1962:1; 1964:1-2].

7. The complacency already deplored in Australian business, industry and administration towards the need for employees with language skills [cf. SSCEA 1984:127; Commonwealth Advisory Committee 1970:17] should be counteracted through a government-funded awareness campaign, through changes to government regulations affecting business and industry and to the export incentive system, and through modifications to industrial awards. Comments made below (Note 8) on the need for and roles of accredited language assessors are also relevant since no small part of the problem has been the difficulty for employers who themselves had little or no experience of other languages and cultures either to be aware of the problem or, still less, to be able to articulate their needs. Nevertheless, the language teaching profession must also accept responsibility for employers' complacency: as already stated, it was for too long too slipshod in indicating what its courses were aiming to do and too élitist, esoteric, and irrelevant in its attitudes, course planning, course focus, and methods [cf. Finlay 1973:xii]. Language teachers are, themselves, aware of the dramatic changes that have taken place in goals, course design and methods in the last ten years enabling them to be more precise, more effective and more practically oriented. This trend must be continued, language teachers must ensure that the consumers of their product (the learners but also their potential employers) are aware of what language teaching is now doing and what it could do to meet their real and practical needs quite directly, and the profession must ensure that it continues to develop the means to provide the specific and practical advice that the consumers of our product need in order to identify and articulate their needs.

8. There is need for a system of accredited language assessors (or testers) analogous to that for translators and interpreters. Such people would be trained in language teaching and have specialist training in language testing. The need for such experts, their role and training have been discussed elsewhere [e.g., Ingram 1985a:257; AFMLTA 1982] and the specialist training required exemplified in a specialist course in language testing available at the Brisbane College of Advanced

Education. Accredited language assessors would serve two prime roles: first, to make valid and reliable statements on language proficiency for whatever purposes they are required (e.g., for someone to gain employment, to enter an educational programme, to obtain a language proficiency allowance, and so on); second, to advise employers and others on their language needs, i.e., on the nature and level of proficiency required for their purposes. Only when such a system is available will valid and reliable assessments of an individual's capabilities be readily obtainable and will employers be able to perceive and articulate their needs. Apart from meeting already serious and widespread needs, such a system would have a profound impact on language teaching itself, further emphasizing practical goals, communicative and proficiency-based methods, and the relevance to society.

9. Means must be found to make better use of the significant skills already existing in society [see Section III above; cf. Commonwealth Department of Education 1982:1]. Issues already discussed (e.g., in Notes 6, 7 and 8) will be of assistance. In addition, migrants and others with language skills and first language understanding of the culture must be assisted to get into relevant positions in the workplace. Such assistance must include more bridging English and vocational re-training programmes to enable non-native English speakers to succeed in educational programmes, to meet English proficiency requirements for vocational registration, and to re-train or to update their existing vocational skills [for more details, see AFMLTA 1982].

10. Further progress is needed in developing and extending the translator and interpreter profession in Australia. Much progress has been made since the formation of the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters in the 1970's but much more is needed: more courses, the recognition of more languages, a gradual increase in the level of expertise expected, greater awareness of the need to employ accredited rather than non-accredited translators and interpreters, eventually more restrictions on the use of non-accredited persons where such restrictions can and should be applied (e.g., in the public service, in courts of law, in legally binding documents and negotiations), encouragement (as in Notes 4, 5 and 6 above) for people to gain accreditation as translators and interpreters as a supplementary skill in the course of their general or vocational education, and recognition of specialist translators and interpreters as belonging to a profession in its own right.

11. A vast improvement is required in the nature and extent of language teacher education, pre-service, inservice, graduate and recurrent. The needs have been elaborated elsewhere [especially AFMLTA 1982] but include better opportunities for teachers to develop and maintain their language proficiency, employment only of teachers whose

proficiency in the target language is 3 or above on the ASLPR and who have had specialist training in second language teaching, availability of higher degrees in applied linguistics in all States, diversification of the languages in which teachers can be trained, and deliberate planning to overcome the acute teacher shortage in all languages especially at the primary and secondary levels [see Cameron 1986, Dean 1981], to introduce new languages into the school system, and to extend the teaching of all existing ones.

12. The languages taught in the education system must be diversified and, as already noted, must be extended to all children. Section III has shown that there is a profound imbalance between Australia's needs (both internally and internationally) and the languages readily available in the education system. Again, the needs in this direction have been spelt out elsewhere [e.g., AFMLTA 1982] but it bears emphasizing that too few languages are taught to too few students for too short a time in Australian schools. This is not to say, as is sometimes concluded, that there is too much French taught since, first, French is a language of major international and cultural importance, second, it is the language at present most in demand [see Ingram 1980a], and, third, it is learned by only 7.45% of students in any case [see Section III]. Rather, more students should be encouraged to learn French and all other languages of relevance to Australia's multicultural and international needs.

The simplistic claim too often used by school and other administrators that one cannot know what language students will need later is readily seen to be no more than an excuse for inaction. Not least, it exaggerates the difficulty of acquiring additional languages in a way found only in monolingual English-speaking countries where natural learning abilities have been allowed to die. As the Federation of British Industries stated:

> "It is important that language learning should come to be regarded as a common possibility and a normal part of any career. The notion should be encouraged, from an early age, that ordinary people should learn second, third or fourth languages, and that anybody may have to acquire something of a new language at any time. This would help break down the dominant tradition of the classical languages, which has spread the notion that language learning is only for the gifted."
>
> [Federation of British Industries 1964:10-11]

In any case, many of the benefits an individual gains from language learning (not least the educational and attitudinal ones) are obtained from the learning of any language and there is good evidence that learning one language facilitates subsequent language learning [see Ingram et al 1976:8-11]. Furthermore, we saw in Section

III that significant proportions of people who have learned a language (any language) continue to make use of it and Emmans's study of language use in British commerce and industry showed that when language skills are readily available they are more likely to be sought [Emmans et al 1974]. In addition, the range of languages relevant to Australia for either internal or international reasons is very extensive and almost any language can be justified. At the school level, local interests, the demographic structure of the local society, and the needs and involvement of local business and industry are all factors to be considered; at the national policy planning level, wider issues will also need to be considered in establishing language priorities, including the needs of the multicultural society and the present and future patterns of migration, international relations, and trade. At the system level, it is inevitable that certain languages of particular cultural, historical, social, economic and international significance and need will be most widely available [e.g., see the list in SSCEA 1984:127] but the language education system must be such that it encourages students and others to learn whatever language is relevant to them. For this purpose, the school system must be structured to give as wide a real choice as possible with at least two languages available in each school (some widely distributed through each State, others occurring less frequently but so as to be accessible in each region), with specialist language schools (as in South Australia) offering more languages (including those in less demand), with an extension of "Saturday" and other out-of-hours schools, and with recognition of and support for the ethnic school system as an invaluable and relatively inexpensive means of enabling a very wide range of languages to be taught (even those of small ethnic communities or countries less immediately significant to Australia). In brief, though priorities must, in practice, be set and will evolve and change as the society and its needs change, the important issue is not so much what language is learned as that each individual should learn at least one other language.

13. There is scope for a major increase in research activity in Australia in the area of applied linguistics and second language teaching and learning. The low priority to research and development in this area despite, as we have seen, its critical importance to Australia's internal and international security, is reflected in the fact that, even in 1986, there is no department or chair of applied linguistics in any Australian university. The research and development needs lie in all aspects of languages, language use, language needs, and language learning in Australia and include research into what languages are used, by whom, when, where and why, what perceived and actual needs exist, how to maximize language learning and make language teaching most effective, the nature and measurement of language proficiency (both general and special purpose), course

design, teaching materials, and national, state and local language and language education policy-making.

14. It is clear that there is urgent need for more systematic attention to languages and language education in Australia. The need for a national language policy has been extensively discussed in Australia over the last ten years [e.g., Ingram 1979a; Commonwealth Department of Education 1982] and has resulted in the inquiry and report on a national language policy by the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts [SSCEA 1984]. It is wholly to be deplored that, almost two years after the release of that report and contrary to established practice to respond to such reports within three months, the Federal Government has still made no considered response. It is urgent that such a response be made, that it be favourable, and that the structures be established to implement, monitor and continuously develop an effective national language policy for Australia. If the implementation is to be adequate, however, the structures must be adequate and, in particular, there is need for a national instrumentality to monitor and develop the policy and its implementation, to act as a clearinghouse on languages, language teaching, and language learning, and to provide advice to government, business, industry and the society in general. For this purpose, the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations has, for some eight years, been advocating a National Language Information and Research Centre [see Ingram 1984] though, as an interim measure that is financially less ambitious, it also supports the recommendation of the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts for a National Advisory Council on Language Policy [SSCEA 1984:6, 224].

15. Finally, there is a very direct way in which language teaching can contribute to the export drive and economic recovery: by selling language learning (especially English as a Second Language) and language teaching methodology overseas. Despite the depressed state of foreign language enrolments in Australian education, it is the case that, in many aspects of methodology and in the quality of much of its English as a Second Language programmes, Australia is highly regarded internationally. Such developments include the size and quality of the Adult Migrant Education Program and such aspects of it as its methodology, course design, assessment, and materials production, the innovative potential of the Australian Language Levels project, and the major initiative taken some years ago by the Queensland Board of Secondary School Studies to adopt a proficiency-based approach to syllabus design and assessment of Secondary School foreign language programmes, a step which led Australia and much of the rest of the world and is only now becoming established in other States, in North America and, at still an earlier stage, in New Zealand. In addition, as the largest, developed English-speaking country in the Asian-Pacific region, Australia has an

opportunity to accept (with a lucrative return) a leadership role in the teaching of English in this part of the world. In other words, the quality of some of the innovations that have occurred in Australia, its experience in teaching English as a Second Language, and its geographical proximity to the world's largest ESL markets in Asia and the Pacific give Australia excellent opportunities to develop ESL and applied linguistics as major export commodities. In fact, the Senate Standing Committee has recognized this potential [SSCEA 1984:77, 226-227] and, since 1985, Federal Government regulations and structures have been amended to encourage tertiary institutions and private organizations to sell programmes to overseas students (e.g., student visa regulations have been eased, the Overseas Students Office established within the Federal Department of Education, and an education section set up within the Australian Trade Commission). The trend that started in 1969 with the first English as a Foreign Language programmes [SSCEA 1984:74] is now accelerating and, granted proper attention to quality control, holds promise of an important contribution both to export income and Australia's international reputation.

VI CONCLUSION:

No nation that cloaks itself in ethnocentric or linguistic isolationism can today hope to survive in the face of fierce international competition for world markets. Language skills and intercultural understanding are not the only answers to Australia's export crisis but it is certain that, without them, no other answers will be successful. The actions they demand are principally less direct, perhaps less obviously immediate than cutting workers' salaries and conditions or paying export incentives, and are, therefore, less attractive and more difficult to implement for vote-conscious governments wishing to be seen to be providing immediate panaceas for economic ailments. Yet this paper has argued that language skills and intercultural understanding are nonetheless indispensable if Australia is to increase its international competitiveness and improve its export economy and it has been shown that this, indeed, has been the experience of those trading nations in Europe and Asia that have most improved their economic situation in the last two decades. However indirect a solution to economic ills the development of language skills and intercultural understanding might seem, Australia must realize, as did the U.S. President's Commission, that

> "The future will belong to nations that are wise as well as strong...
>
> "...foreign languages, as a key to unlock the mysteries of other customs and cultures, can no longer be viewed as an educational or civic luxury." [Perkins 1979:458-459].

If Australia is ever to drag itself out of its trading mire, it must

dramatically increase its level of skills in other languages and its understanding of other cultures (especially those with whom we aspire to trade), and it must ensure that those skills that are available are used to the best advantage. A fundamental ingredient in Australia's economic recovery, therefore, lies in the hands of language teachers who must become more numerous, more diversified in the language skills they offer, more expert in both their language and their teaching, and more responsive to the urgent and demonstrable needs of Australian society. All evil brings its own punishment: Australia's institutionalized racism (evident in its anglophobia, in its former "white Australia" policies, and in their educational residue in predominantly monolingual, ethnocentric curricula) has vastly contributed to our present economic collapse. The only solution lies in a just, balanced and insightful view of the importance of other races, cultures and languages and of our absolute interdependence with them; the unavoidable corollary of this solution demands a dramatic upgrading in the quality and extent of language learning throughout the formal and informal education system.

Footnotes

1. Note that the figures presented in this paragraph seem slightly lower than other surveys (e.g. 11.9% given here as studying languages in the upper Secondary School compared with 15% in the surveys reported in AFMLTA 1982:Section II.4). The reasons for this discrepancy lie in the way the statistics have been collected. The figures quoted in this paper are based on student enrolments and thus give a more accurate picture of student coverage than the higher language enrolment figures that count students taking more than one language repetitively for each language.

2. Note that these figures, as bad as they are, significantly under-estimate the real shortfall since they are based on the number of overseas positions rated as requiring language skills and do not take account of the wider needs for language skills and cultural understanding amongst policy-makers and other personnel in Canberra and in overseas posts.

3. At a seminar on the export of education conducted by the Australian Trade Commission in Brisbane on 5 August, 1986, participants were told that the fees for such agents recruiting students for courses were up to 15% of the course cost per student recruited.

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